

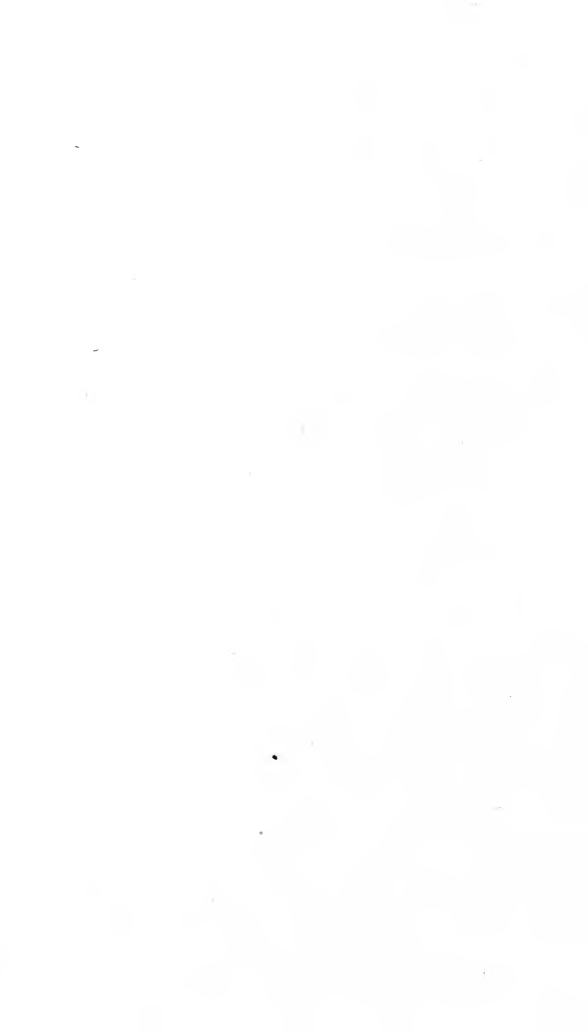
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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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FRONTISPIECE.



Queen Eagle sends greeting-A GRAND MASQUERADE.

Pub. by J. Mawman, Poultry. April 2-1868.

THE
EAGLE'S MASQUE.

By TOM TIT.

Here, birds of all feathers, all habits, all sizes,
All tongues, and all climates, are met in disguises.

THE SECOND EDITION.

PRINTED FOR J. MAWMAN, POULTRY;

BY G. WOODFALL, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1808.



TO THE

JUVENILE WORLD.

MY DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS,

IF "The Eagle's Masque" should afford you half the pleasure which I have myself received from "The Peacock at Home," I will make no further demands upon your approbation.

My Brothers and Sisters in this line of literature are accustomed to distinguish particular passages in their poems by remarks, or explanations at the bottom of the page.—I do not intend, however, to follow their example. What I wish is, that you should first get through all your laughing, without interruption; reserving for you afterwards the useful amusement of picking out further information for yourselves, as you will find it in those books of

Natural History, with coloured figures, which your Parents, or Tutors, will have the goodness to lay before you for that purpose.

In the next place, I have great pride, and pleasure, in being able to assure you, that I have not, in a single instance, knowingly set down any circumstance relating, in a *general* way, to the persons, lives, and manners, of my feathered Characters, which you may not find to be strictly true. If some cases should occur, in which this assertion may puzzle, or surprize you, your kind friends above mentioned will make the proper distinctions for you; and then, you will find every thing as it should be.

And so, recommending my Birds, and myself, to your favour and protection,

I remain

your affectionate Friend,

and Play-fellow,

TOM TIT.

THE
EAGLE'S MASQUE.

WHEN "The Butterfly's Ball," and the "Grass-hopper's Feast,"

Had resounded abroad from the west to the east,
The *Peacock*, whose bosom is vanity's station,
In a trice was "At Home" to the feather'd Creation.—
The trumpet of Fame was more active than ever:
The Gala so gay!—the arrangements so clever!—
The Genius of Mirth flew in every direction;
The Queen on her cliff caught the raging in-
fection,

And joy flourished under the royal protection.

Soon, the Birds, cock-a-hoop at the call of their betters,
To Court were invited by circular letters:
The *Pigeon* in waiting flew round, and display'd
"Queen Eagle sends Greeting—A GRAND MASQUE-
RADE."

Of a grand Masquerade not a notion had they—
And Birds are as curious as Ladies, they say.
What impatience was felt to be ready and drest!
Not a bird, nor a birdling could sleep in her nest.
What fighting for Characters!—shifting of plumes!
How the RAVEN desponds, and the PEACOCK presumes!

At length 'tis arriv'd—the grand, critical Night!
And by thousands they throng to the scene of delight.
Not a fowl staid at home that had spirits, or wings—
Every Biped was there that pecks, flutters, or sings.
The Empress received them with affable grace,
In an Aviary built at her favourite Place;
Though, 'twas notic'd, she coldly accosted the GULL,
Who had guarded some sheep from her Majesty's pull.
But here—as *incog.* was the word—you may ask,
How the Queen knew the Gull, notwithstanding his mask?
Why, an Eagle looks sharper than I, or than you, Sir,
And, without any spectacles, knows who is who, Sir.
Each Masquer, in order presented, fell flat,
And the CARDINAL lifted his claw to his *hat*.
First compliments over, the Revels are brewing—
Assist me, O Proteus! to tell what was doing,
While Birds of all feathers, all habits, all sizes,
All tongues, and all climates, were met in disguises.

First the huge ALBATROSS, with his crony, the PENGUIN,
(Like most other sea-faring folk, over sanguine)
Had hop'd their identity nicely to veil,
By attempting the waddle and cry of the QUAIL.
Not to mention the MANAKIN, too—little varlet!
Who, because he was born to be crested with scarlet,
And wears a blue spencer, so sparkish and glossy,—
Not satisfied thus to look handsome and saucy,



*The Empress received them with affable grace,
Though 'twas noticed, she coldly accosted the Gull.*



The *helmet* put on of the great CASSOWARY,
 So fierce!—you'd have back'd him to fight with a Fairy,
 The BOOBY, by nature a blockhead confest,
 In the top-knot and train of the PEACOCK was drest;
 But of 'all whom the stratagem aim'd to seduce,
 He could make but two converts—the GULL and the
 GOOSE.

The said Goose, with her distant Relation, GOOSANDER,
 (As the husband of each was afraid to command her,)
 Wo. . the breeches I mean, were the garb, of
 the GANDER.

The COOT, and the CURLEW, the MALLARD, and TEAL,
 (For once, and for ever, their names to conceal,
 To the RAZOR-BILL went with a singular suit—
 That the webs he would slit of each membranous foot;
 From a cunning conceit that the length of their toes
 Would throw dust in the eyes of their natural foes.
 "The chief reason," said they, "why the favor we ask ye,
 Is because, as we hear, little Count Borowlaski
 Last night, for a Pigmy, was chas'd by a CRANE,
 But, by standing on tip-toe, escap'd being slain;
 And it matters but little, since life is so sweet,
 If we save it by slitting, or stretching, our feet."
 The BUZZARD,—a mighty weak kind of a fowl,
 Hit on no better method of seeming an OWL,
 Than by catching a Mouse, and affecting to howl.

The BUTCHER-BIRD, too, changing battle for love,
 In the plumes of a PIGEON, made up to a dove:
 He could manage the billing, though out in the cooing—
 As well might a *Kitten* sham *Cow* . . . and be mooing!
 But his dove in a twinkling escap'd from his view,
 And return'd, in the crest of a fierce COCKATOO:
 Whilst ye, tiny TITS!—both the *lark*, and the *mouse*—
 Drest your legs up in feathers, and call'd yourselves

GROUSE.

But it would surely have forc'd an old hermit to laugh,
 Had he seen the gay FINCHES,—*gold, green, bull, and chaff*,
 By vanity blinded, and panting for praise,
 As SWANS, or as TURKEYCOCKS, dancing the hays!
 Conceive, too—but I can't conceive it if you can,
 Little WREN bending under the beak of the TOUCAN!
 While the Toucan himself, though an hundred times bigger,
 Votes his own bill a bore,—as you'll easily figure.
 Not a bird of the air can you bring me whose belly
 Can half as much hold as the pouch of the PELI-
 CAN:—yet in despite of his size and his maw,
 ('Twas in vain to object) he *would* come as a DAW!
 And what shall we think of the NIGHTINGALE'S folly,
 Who, no longer “most musical, most melancholy,”
 A green Domino wore, and kept screaming “poor
 Polly!”

Whilst POLL was like other pragmatical Youngsters,
 Who, because they are talkers, must set up for songsters.



Poll was like other pragmatical Youngsters.
Who, because they are talkers, must set up for Songsters.



But look, if you love me, at Signor FLAMINGO,
 Who, in spite of his person and outlandish lingo,
 His spindles close up to his body is buckling,
 To fit on in their stead the squab legs of a DUCKLING !
 He came from the banks of the fam'd Oroonoko,
 But in mix'd conversation, was dull as the CUCKOO,
 For, say just what you would, he still answer'd "tocoko !" }
 But the BARNACLE best play'd his part at our Masque ;
 " The Barnacle !—how ?"—Yes, I thought you would ask :
 Why, he look'd like himself, to be sure, but, to boot,
 Might be taken for GANDER, DRAKE, PUFFIN, or }
 COOT ;—
 So he spar'd the expence of a Masquerade suit.—
 If any one there could be odder than that,
 'Twas that leathery, feathery mongrel, the BAT,
 Who, when told that no ticket admitted a *Mouse*,—
 Took huff as a *bird*, and flew out of the house.
 The *Flying-fish*, too, shall come in for his share,
 Who in haste from the ocean contriv'd to be there, }
 Just to make the *Bird-fanciers* puzzle and stare.
 But see from the mountains of Scotland, the OUSEL—
 Our motley community bent to bamboozle—
 Doff his crest, and look *sharp*, in the bill of a SNIPE,
 Though to mimick the *whistle's* too much for his pipe.
 Next, the PTARMIGAN plenty of ridicule draws ;
 For, though booted with feathers quite down to his claws,

Yet, neglecting to shave them,—neglecting to gather,
 In support of his part, one appropriate feather,
 The lubberly Simpleton hopes he may pass
 For the delicate LAPWING!—see “Lap-dog and Ass!”
 Then the WATER-HEN—born (though you smile at the thing)
 With two spiders for claws, and a spur at each wing,
 Now, shifting her spurs from her wings to her toes,
 With a comb in her head, and cock-feathers for clothes,
 Takes her oath she is *game*, and e’en fancy she crows! }
 “But of all the brave birds that I ever did see,”
 Give me, for my money, the RUFF, and the REE!
 For because they wear *epaulettes*, quarrel and fight,
 Each brisk little soldier behold *Serjeant KITE*!—
 But the queerest exchange in the whole Masquerade,
 Was that by the WOODCOCK and BOTTLENOSE made:
 Perhaps you may think ’twas of claws or of quills;—
 Not a whit, Sir,—no less than a barter of *bills*!
 Though the diff’rence betwixt ’em, in my way of judging,
 Was the same that we see ’twixt a bodkin and bludgeon.
 But to all that love laughing I hasten to shew
 A Lilliput Lady, and Brobdignag Beau.
 Since the day you were born, little friends did you ever
 See an OSTRICH gallanting a HUMMING-BIRD?—
 “Never.”

Then open your eyes, and I’ll show a sight:—
 Do but mark her unsuitable Sweet-heart’s delight,
 While she daintily murmurs and sings round her Knight, }



Since the day you was born, little friends, did you ever
See an Ostrich gallanting a Humming Bird? Never.



Now, nestling amongst the thick plumes of his tail,
 Now perch'd on his beak—like a sprat on a whale!
 While with monstrous endearment, and dalliance uncouth,
 Each caress is repaid by her camel-like Youth.
 The ungainly Philander, with tender advance,
 Is now breaking his muscular shanks to a dance;
 Now, veering and steering with cumbersome grace,
 The quick-steps of his minikin Mistress to trace,
 In vain her huge Romeo would bend, at her beck,
 The languishing cable he rears as a neck!
 That Cupid is blind we have evidence ample,
 But sure never a rule had so rich an example!—
 That this cooing Colossus this two-legged Tree
 Should succeed with a bird you would take for a Bee!—
 But enough—for my memory sadly it poses,
 To follow them thus through their Metempsychoses;
 You may guess at the rest—but 'twill yield us some fun to
 Observe in that corner a notable Junto,
 Who had met by agreement to quizz, and to hoax,
 As they came within view, the *transmogrified* folks;—
 Though the BISHOP, the POPE, and the CARDINAL, duly
 Loud censures pronounc'd, when their tongues grew unruly,
 "And pray what were the names of this merciless Quorum,
 So bitter that none stood in safety before 'em?"—
 The PARROT, the MAGPIE, JAY, CHATTERER, and
 DAW,
 With a few other *babillards* more than I saw.

That musty old crusty old Tabby the OWL,
 Like a Judge in his wig, or a Monk in his cowl,
 Sat muzzing behind, half apart from the rest,
 By the glitter, and bustle, and babble distress;
 Sorely wishing 'twere time to slink home to her nest.
 Her poll in her shoulders, her hooting-pipe mute,
 With a bird in her beak, and a mouse in each foot,
 Half listening, half dozing—now scolding, now tickled,
 While in vinegar sauce reputations were pickled,
 Her eye-lids, where Dulness look'd wise in a frown
 Now stretch'd in a goggle—now gravely let down,
 She dreams in a study far muddier than brown.—

But 'tis time to rejoin the satirical party,
 And learn, if we can, why they're laughing so hearty;
 Though so many the talkers—the list'ners so few,
 That 'tis well if we bring away one word in two.
 The sign for unmasking had now taken place,
 And each guest was betray'd by his feathers, or face.
 Our venomous Critics now sharpen'd their looks,
 And whatever was curious went down in their books.
 First, the fine BIRD OF PARADISE—every one knew it,
 By its train thrice as long as the body that drew it.
 Here Envy herself could do nothing but praise—
 To the keen disappointment of Parrots, and Jays.

Yet they peck'd at the PEACOCK:—" See how he
assumes !

With his tail all astrut as he swims round the rooms!—

One would swear that his croup had been nick'd by
the grooms."

(Jay.) "That impudent GOOSE!—one may well under-
stand her—

How close would I coop her, if I were the Gander!"—

(Magpie.) "Hark!—can that be a bird?—it more bel-
lows than sings—

Or a bull seeing masks, under favour of wings?"—

(Daw.) " 'Tis a BITTERN: they say he's a *Heron* by race;
But sure never bird had a *warble* so bass!

Perhaps he is come from Cape Horn, he is fagg'd,
And is roaring for hunger."

(Chatterer.) "I wish he were gagg'd!—

But see, here's another—*this* comes from Brazil;—

What a figure!—let's kill it, and stuff it."—"We
will."

"His back's like the mantle that covers a Judge,

His breast like a Pigeon's, so burly and budge,

And his bill!—not a spit but is shorter, I vow:—

What a prize to a farmer for making his mow!"—

(Daw.) "Nay, if *bills* are your taste, look behind you

I pray . . . O!

My nest against yours that yon bird's the CALAO.

A bill!—no, a scythe, with its grindstone annex'd
With edges and saws of all colours perplex'd.

Whate'er be its use in the business of food,

'Tis a rare apparatus for drawing of blood!"

(*Parrot.*) "Look at yon pert AVOSET—tall as a
 steeple!

How she turns up her saucy long nose at the people!

Then that filthified fish-eating gawky, the AUK,

That stands up like an Orator going to talk—

Yet it matters not much how she stands on her legs,—

But if I were a man, and lov'd spoon-meat—i'fegs;

I'd look twice ere I ventur'd to bob for her eggs;

For, my dear, where d'ye think she deposits her stock?

Why, each stuck by itself on its needle of rock!"

(*Daw.*) "Do look at the CRANE BALEARIC—what
 paces!—

Did Vestris or Parisot teach her the graces?

See the slip-shoulder'd thing, how she pokes as she goes,

With her back in the air, and her Bill at her toes!—

But what Fright have we here?"

"'Tis a BARBET, I've heard."

(*Magpie.*) "Then I'm glad I'm no Barbet:—a beak
 with a beard!"—

(*Jay.*) "That's the BEE-EATER, is it not?"

"So they report."

(*Magpie.*) "Well!—his back's long enough, if his legs are
 too short:





— "The Dodo! 'The Dodo!"

And then the black stock!—that's to shew he's a male—
Not forgetting *two horns*, growing out of his tail."

(*Daw.*) "Fie, Mag! you grow scurrilous—*feathers*, not
horns;

An antler disgraces—a feather adorns.—

But what hook-nose is here? pri'thee look at her placket,
Be-patch'd and be-speckled like Harlequin's jacket,
Or, to judge by her *marks*,—though the notion is droll,—
She seems just coming out with the *petite verole*."

(*Jay.*) "I'm told 'tis the CURLEW—a stranger to me,
As I never change visits with Ladies at sea.—

But look at that Quizz, and be grave if you can;
'Tis the CUSHEW—with legs like the flesh of a man :
As to humps on the *back*, they're a blemish one knows—
But who ever heard of a hump on one's *nose*?—

(*Daw.*) But heigh!—look at the *Owl*—she seems
quite in a fuss;

I never yet saw the old Dowager thus—

Why, she's wriggling and giggling . . . exactly like *us*!

Pray, Ma'am, what's the matter?"

(*Owl.*) ————— "The DODO! the DODO!—

"Where? which, Ma'am?"—"There! there! do but
look at it—O do!"

(*Daw.*) "I see it! I see it!—O would I were stronger!
I shall die, I shall burst, if I look any longer:

Who bred it?—who fed it?—What is it, good Owl?—

(*Owl.*) "Why, a logger-head Turtle half turned to a fowl!

Or a wool-sack alive!—or a Porpoise with wings!—
 (I'd be seen at noon day but to hear how it sings!—)
 Or in short—if I dare such a fancy set up—
 'Tis a *Chicken-Rhinoceros*, ready to pup!
 What a beak!—like two barrels, one black and one red,
 On a head bluff and bulky, just like Beachy Head!
 At the root of its chaps—like a ring on a pig—
 How becoming that circular thicket of wig!
 When it yawns, it must petrify all the beholders
 By jerking its jobbernowl back on its shoulders!—
 What the plague does it carry stuff'd out from its throttle,—
 Like cherries, or strawberries, cramm'd in a pottle?
 But to balance the load, on its back there's a bump,
 And, for tail, a few feathers, see! perk'd on its hump,
 Then its wings!—not a DAB-CHICK has smaller or
 shorter;
 Sure she never can fly,—or how *can* they support her?
 But for this there is full compensation *below*—
 Upon legs such as those might an Elephant go!
 But its eyes!—'twere a sin to forget 'em—good lack!
 What peepers were ever so round or so black?
 Then its air, and address!—and its walk!—but enough!—
 Created it seems but to stare and to stuff."
 (*Chatterer.*) "Well said Madam Owl—for a maiden
 oration;
 Who says you are dull?—'tis a base fabrication:—

But the length of her speech has exhausted her quite,
 And that *Jupiter's nod* bids a solemn good night!—
 Adieu, then, dear Dodo!—most marvellous lubber!—
 Choice compound of clumsiness, blunders, and blubber!—
 But I turn from this bird of all birds without regret,
 For here comes a contrast, in form of an EGRET:
 That leg was a truncheon—while this is a stick:
 This bill is a bayonet—that was a brick.
 But bless us! who's here?"

“ 'Tis the LONG TAILED FINCH.”

(*Chatterer.*) “ Long, indeed!—thus a bird takes an ell]
 for an inch.—

But pray, now, that fine-coated Gentleman mark,
 With a mouth like a pen, and a throat like a shark:
 By the din that he keeps, one would think for the night
 He's enacting the part of a spinning-wheel.”

“ Right:—

But whatever he seems, he's a GOAT SUCKER, Madam!”
 (*Chatterer.*) “ Then I'd quiet his tongue with *my* goats,
 if I had 'em.—

But look!—here's the SWALLOW advancing to greet us,
 With her mouth as wide open as though she would eat us;
 And see how her tail quite asunder has started,
 Just as if all its feathers had quarrell'd and parted.
 I suppose she will shortly *abscond* for the season—
 You and I, miss, have nothing to do with the *reason*;

But this I *will* say— when I take to *my* pinions,
 I don't leave the bounds of the Eagle's dominions:
 To be sure she has very particular ways—
 What a mystery hangs o'er her *travelling days*!—
 If she goes, 'tis incog.—or she hides if she stays.—
 But tell me the name of yon swaggering youth."

(*Daw.*) "He's the CRESTED BLACK VULTURE, Miss."

(*Chatterer.*) "Crested forsooth!

Such a title is, sure, on all titles a jest;—
 Get a lump on your head—and then swear 'tis a *crest*!
 Then, his beak, as I live, is half black and half blue—
 Has he found a fine name for *this* accident too?
 But the best is his feathery collar, or border,
 On which, without doubt, he will found a new Order.
 Were I, though, a Spark with so haughty a mein,
 I'd alter my manners, and learn to live clean;
 I'd dine on fresh meat, at the least, were I able,
 And few courses of *carrion* should come to my table.—
 Apropos of that matter, two birds are before us,
 Whose habits I hold to be quite indecorous—
 The RICE-BIRD, and TUMBLER—let's hoot them in
 chorus!

E'en a Saint, or a Stock-fish, would storm at the first,
 For cramming his crop till his bowels are burst:
 The second—yes—look how he tumbles and reels,
 Having swill'd till he knows not his head from his heels!

For the Rice-bird—I blame more than wonder perhap—
But who taught the Tumbler his way to a *tap*?—

(*Parrot*) “Those are CUCKOWS, I think—the im-
pertinent Pests!—

So, Ladies, I’d have you look well to your *nests*.—

But tell me, Miss *Pye*, who is that whipper-snapper?”—

(*Magpie*.) “Who is it, Poll Parrot!—Not know the
DIDAPPER!

A good Diver I’m told; but *he* surely must fail

In his *walking*, (pray look?) who has legs at his tail!

He knows his weak side, it should seem, for he makes

A great fuss with his fishing in rivers and lakes.”

(*Jay*.) “What great stupid bird have we here?—Can
it speak?”—

(*Daw.*) “The very same question just popp’d to *my*
beak.”

(*Magpie*.) “He’s by nature a ninny—by title a
BUSTARD—

As fond of good worms, as a Cit of good custard;

And, to shew that he carries more body than brains,—

When the glutton has din’d himself fat on the plains,

Too sick to be soaring, he’s kill’d for his pains.”

(*Parrot*.) “Make room for Miss DEMOISELLE!”

(*Jay*.) “Demoiselle!—pooh! pooh!—

’Tis no less than that very fine Lady the HOOPOO:

One row of crest-feathers might serve me or you;

But *she’s* never contented with fewer than two.—

But see, just return'd from a voyage, the *Pewit*;
 He'll treat us, I fear, with a spice of his sea-wit :
 No—he cuts us, I vow !—I conclude that with him
 No birds are worth knowing but birds that can swim.”
 (*Daw.*) “That long-legged Stick is a STORK, I suppose;—
 Pray why does he strut so, and rise on his toes?

No creature his stars has less reason to thank :
 When you've mentioned his neck, and his bill, and his
 shank,

There's no more to be said—for his body's a blank ;
 And yet this was the Tyrant commissioned to tease up
 The Frogs in their fancy for Kings—'tis in *Æsop*.
 Nay—what's more amazing—this fop of the tribe is
 In Egypt ador'd by the nick-name of *Ibis*.—
 But I'm all in a flutter!—a *Soldier*, my dear!”

(*Magpie.*) “A Soldier!—who is it?”

“The bold GRENADIER—

So eager, they tell me, so fierce to engage,
 That, when put on his mettle, he'll fight through his cage.
 I could like, of all things, if you won't think it cruel,
 'Twixt him and the BUTCHER to cook up a duel.”—

(*Jay.*) “But in all this gay party, the SNOW-BIRD I miss.

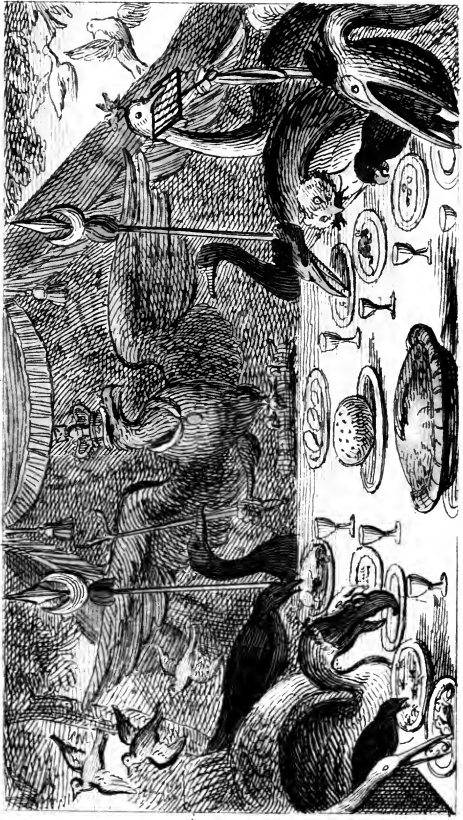
(*Chatterer.*) “No, I spied her just now:—what a simple-
 ton 'tis !

In winter she's always in *white*.”

“Any reason ?

“Yes, a compliment paid to the *flakes* of the season.”





—from flying or walking, now sat down at table.
To a Pic-nic provided as each one was able.

But should all this unmerciful prattle be penn'd,
 My story would never be brought to an end.
 So it only remains, with a few parting words,
 To take leave of this marvellous Meeting of Birds ;
 Who, from flying or walking, now sat down at table
 To a *Pic-nic* provided as each one was able.
 As the Guests were domestic—erratic—aquatic,
 The dishes were various, the feeders ecstatic,
 And the salt, too, that season'd the supper was Attic.
 The fish were delightfully drest by the *Cook*,
 Whom for this very purpose, without line or hook,
 In the shallows of Cornwall, the *PELICAN* took.
 In a party so large you must easily think
 Some dissensions arose about victuals and drink.
 Thus, the tongues of the delicate all were at work,
 In abusing that foul-feeding savage the *STORK*,
 For harpooning live frogs with his double-prong'd fork;
 While the *BUSTARD* by few was esteem'd over-nice,
 For supping so sweetly on moles, and on mice.
 Then, the lovers of salad were fuming and huffing,
 At the very bad oil introduc'd by the *PUFFIN*.
 The *BLACKBIRD*, beside, rais'd a host of deriders,
 For piling his plate up with dozens of spiders.
 But the *PELICAN* most was detested by all;
 For the fish shovell'd into her pouch at a haul
 Would have set up a moderate Fishmonger's stall:

Yet the herrings thus pack'd in her natural barrel
 ('Twas *this* that provok'd all the clamour and quarrel)
 She dreams not of eating—far less of digesting—
 Till her leisure shall serve, while her babies are resting.
 No Pelican's perfect, I grant:—what of that?—
 She's the best, *very* best, of all Mothers, that's flat.
 For what other Mamma keeps a tap of good blood
 Running out at her breast for her family's good?—
 But among all the gluttons that peck'd at the feast,
 The HERN and the CORMORANT lik'd themselves least;
 For both, though with ev'ry fair right to be burst,—
 Poor things!—were as lanky at last as at first!
 Yet the Parrot seem'd most incommoded at supper,
 So much was her under lip cramp'd by the upper.
 The OSTRICH was long but a mere stander-by,
 While his bowels would dismally grumble and cry.
 Such digestible dainties *his* stomach rejected:—
 Never yet was, for him, a worse supper selected!
 So he pick'd a few stones which the place did environ,
 Which he crumbled as bread in a nice mess of iron.
 “A supper of iron!—pray, Sir, was it *hot*?”
 No, my arch little rogue—I should think it was not.
 “But how did he get it, Sir?”—How!—what a question!
 You'd better have ask'd how he got the digestion:
 For the *stuff*—that's a matter he easily settles;
 For instance—*our* Ostrich despising the victuals,
 Fell to kissing the cook for the pots and the kettles.

While thus they were lining and moist'ning their clay,
 A choice Band of performers were piping away.
 But, as most knew the natural notes of the rest,
 It was voted by all—*Imitations* were best.
 The BLACK-CAP, who often had plac'd himself snug,
 For the purpose of catching the NIGHTINGALE'S jug,
 Had listen'd so closely, and learnt it so pat,
 He was dubb'd the *mock Nightingale*, merely for that :—
 So he jugg'd, and he trill'd, and he quaver'd so pretty,
 That his Master himself hardly knew his own ditty.
 Yet one thing in dudgeon the company took—
 An occasional bass from the RAVEN, or ROOK ;
 Though the gravest were somewhat to laughter inclin'd,
 As the WAG-TAIL kept time by a jerk from behind.—
 Then, the BULFINCH began—and 'tis well he was taught,
 For the note he was born to, is not worth a groat :
 But he prov'd an apt scholar ; and soon, not a tone
 Nor an air cou'd he hear, but he made it his own.—
 The GOLD-FINCH, a qualified *Treble*, was there,
 And was prest to exhibit—but, though you may stare,
 This puppy preferr'd the whole ev'ning to pass,
 In prinking and dressing his plumes at the glass.
 But soon in the place of this pert little Antic,
 Rose a Singer of note from across the Atlantic ;
 The MOCK-BIRD—who beat all competitors hollow,
 By leading, where none had the courage to follow.

Not content, like his mimicking sisters and brothers,
 To go out of himself, and to personate others,
 He ravish'd all ears with such strains of his own—
 In a descant so solemn, so melting a mean,—
 As Apollo might breathe from his musical throne!—
 But music's no guard against mischief, 'tis found;
 For this vocal Magician, this Tyrant of sound,
 Has a trick—as with just indignation I state—
 To decoy little warblers, by mocking the mate;
 But no sooner has manag'd his dupes to inveigle,
 Than he scares out their souls with the screams of an Eagle.

Now the tables were clear'd, and the Cock gave a crow.—
 At the signal, her Majesty bow'd to them low—
 Inuendo imperial! whence all were to gather,
 That their room was desir'd—than their company rather.
 So, with thanks to the King and his Consort for all,
 In three flirts of a wing, they had emptied the Hall.

THE END.



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